

## CLAIMS

1. A data provisioning method, comprising the steps:
  - storing data items or data defining access to data items for provision to users;
  - 5 maintaining, for one or more users, respective service level data usable to determine a level of service to be provided to the respective users;.
  - receiving data items or data defining access to data items from users for provision to users;
  - receiving rating data from one or more users relating to data items provided to 10 those users;
  - changing the respective service level data for those users from which data items or data defining access to data items were received in dependence upon received rating data relating to those received data items or data defining access to data items; and
  - providing service to a user in dependence on the service level data for that user.
- 15 2. A method according to claim 1, wherein the service level data comprises a proportion value, and wherein the servicing step comprises determining a sub-set of the data items or data defining access to data items corresponding to a proportion of the available data items or data defining access to data items substantially corresponding to 20 the proportion value; and providing the sub-set to the requesting user.
- 25 3. A method according to claim 1, wherein each data item or set of data defining access to a data item has a property having a value, and the service level data comprises a content access value relating to the property, wherein the servicing step comprises determining a sub-set of the data items or data defining access to data items in dependence on the respective values, and providing the sub-set to the requesting user.
- 30 4. A method according to claim 3, wherein the property values and content access values are times and/or dates.
5. A method according to claim 3, wherein the property values and content access values are geographical positions.
- 35 6. A method according to claim 1, wherein the service level data is a transmission rate value, and the servicing step comprises determining a set of data items or data

defining access to data items which meet the request, and providing the set to the user at a transmission rate in dependence on the transmission rate value.

7. A method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the changing step  
5 further comprises receiving requests for specific data items or data defining access to data items from users, and changing the service level data for the user from which the requested data item or data defining access to data was received.

8. A method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the changing step  
10 further comprises monitoring the time or date at which a first data item or data defining access to a data item is received in relation to the time or date a second data item or data defining access to a data item is received, and changing the service level data of the user from the which first data item or data defining access to a data item was received in dependence on the difference between the times and/or dates.

15

9. A method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the changing step further comprises monitoring the time since the receipt of a data item or data defining access to a data item, and changing the service level data of the user from which the data item or data defining access to the data item was received in dependence on the  
20 monitored time.

10. A method according to any of the preceding claims, and further comprising the step of permitting a user to perform manipulations of the stored content items or data defining access to content items in dependence on the user's service level data

25

11. A method according to any of the preceding claims, collectively performed by at least a sub-set of peers within a peer to peer network.

12. A method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the rating is  
30 weighted according to the service level value of the rating user.

13. A computer program or suite of computer programs arranged such that when executed by a computer system or a plurality of computer systems it/they cause the computer system or systems to perform the method of any of the preceding claims.

35

14. A computer readable storage medium storing a computer program or any one or more of a suite of computer programs according to claim 13.
15. A data provisioning system, comprising:
  - 5 a data store storing:-
    - i) data items or data defining access to data items for provision to users; and
    - ii) for one or more users, respective service level data usable to determine a level of service to be provided to the respective users;
  - 10 data receiving means arranged in use to receive:-
    - i) data items or data defining access to data items from users for provision upon request to users; and
    - ii) rating data from one or more users relating to data items provided to those users; and
  - 15 a processor arranged in use to perform the following steps:-
    - i) change the respective service level data for those users from which data items or data defining access to data items were received in dependence upon received rating data relating to those received data items or data defining access to data items; and
    - ii) provide service to a user in dependence on the service level data for that 20 user.
16. A system according to claim 15, wherein the service level data comprises a proportion value, and wherein the servicing step comprises determining a sub-set of the data items or data defining access to data items corresponding to a proportion of the 25 available data items or data defining access to data items substantially corresponding to the proportion value; and providing the sub-set to the requesting user.
17. A system according to claim 15, wherein each data item or set of data defining access to a data item has a property having a value, and the service level data comprises 30 a content access value relating to the property, wherein the servicing step comprises determining a sub-set of the data items or data defining access to data items in dependence on the respective values, and providing the sub-set to the requesting user.
18. A system according to claim 17, wherein the property values and content access 35 values are times and/or dates.

19. A system according to claim 17, wherein the property values and content access values are geographical positions.

5 20. A system according to claim 15, wherein the service level data is a transmission rate value, and the servicing step comprises determining a set of data items or data defining access to data items which meet the request, and providing the set to the user at a transmission rate in dependence on the transmission rate value.

10 21. A system according to any of claims 15 to 20, wherein the changing step further comprises receiving requests for specific data items or data defining access to data items from users, and changing the service level data for the user from which the requested data item or data defining access to data was received.

15 22. A system according to any of claims 15 to 21, wherein the changing step further comprises monitoring the time or date at which a first data item or data defining access to a data item is received in relation to the time or date a second data item or data defining access to a data item is received, and changing the service level data of the user from the which first data item or data defining access to a data item was received in dependence 20 on the difference between the times and/or dates.

23. A system according to any of claims 15 to 22, wherein the changing step further comprises monitoring the time since the receipt of a data item or data defining access to a data item, and changing the service level data of the user from which the data item or data 25 defining access to the data item was received in dependence on the monitored time.

24. A system according to any of claims 15 to 23, wherein the processor is further arranged to perform the following steps:-  
30 permit a user to perform manipulations of the stored content items or data defining access to content items in dependence on the user's service level data.

25. A system according to any of claims 14 to 24, collectively embodied by at least a sub-set of peers within a peer to peer network.

26. A system according to any of claims 15 to 25, wherein the rating is weighted according to the service level value of the rating user.
27. A data provisioning method, comprising the steps:
  - 5        storing data items or data defining access to data items for provision to users; maintaining, for one or more users, respective service level data usable to determine a level of service to be provided to the respective users;
  - 10      receiving data items or data defining access to data items from users for provision to users;
  - 15      receiving rating data from one or more users relating to data items provided to those users; changing the respective service level data for those users from which data items or data defining access to data items were received in dependence upon received rating data relating to those received data items or data defining access to data items; and
  - 20      providing service to a user in dependence on the service level data for that user, wherein each data item or set of data defining access to a data item has a property having a value, and the service level data comprises a content access value relating to the property, wherein the servicing step comprises determining a sub-set of the data items or data defining access to data items in dependence on the respective values, and providing the sub-set to the requesting user.